

# Factors and Themes in Native Education and School Boards/First Nations Tuition Negotiations and Tuition Agreement Schooling

George E. Burns

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education  
of the University of Toronto

---

*The Aboriginal people adapted, thrived, and flourished for thousands of years before European occupation of North America. This overall success was largely a result of the interconnectedness of their social, personality, and cultural systems, which were notably indigenous in both spirit and character. Thereafter, these systems, including institutions comprising the social system as in the case of kinship, spirituality, political, economic, education, and political structures, have undergone the eroding effects of colliding Western world views and Indigenous world views, the former being steeped in the hegemonic aspirations and expectations of Eurocentricity. This article examines a range of hegemonic factors and themes pertaining to the Indian residential school era and the master tuition agreement eras in Canada. The article suggests that in the absence of radical changes pertaining specifically to First Nations/provincial school boards tuition agreement negotiations and tuition schooling (where First Nations have decided this is the preferred option among various alternatives) tuition agreement schooling will continue to be noninclusive, racist, discriminatory, and assimilative in practice. The article recommends a praxis of Native control of tuition negotiations and tuition schooling as a strategy for intervening in the neocolonialist traditions and practices of provincial school board systems and their schools, where feasible.*

## Introduction

The principal agents of cultural interaction with the traditional Aboriginal population following the arrival of Europeans in Canada in the early 16th century include fur traders, European settlers, Christian missionaries, and the State (Barman, Hébert, & McCaskill, 1987). Combined, they have had a devastating effect on the Native peoples through policies and practices of domination, control, oppression, exploitation, and modernity. Over the past 200 years Canadian society has stripped Aboriginal people of their land, their culture, their spiritual beliefs, and their way of life (Chisholm, 1994). Canada has been unrelenting in its attempts to break the Native spirit. It has used schools and laws to eradicate customs and traditions in its multivariate attempts to force assimilation (Comeau & Santin, 1995). Virtually every government organization has served to marginalize the needs and rights of Native peoples; and the education system has been among the worst (York, 1992).

Viola (1990) provides a partial perspective to the magnitude of the problem by stating that in spite of being the first occupants in North America, and surviving their holocaust over 500 years, only a tiny percentage of the non-Indian population

knows that American Indians still exist. Although the days of overt genocide have passed, the Native people still face immense problems and challenges—and, as always, the problems are residual of the pervasive effects of Eurocentricism, prejudice, stereotyping, racism, and systemic discrimination in non-Native institutions, organizations, and agencies, including provincial school board systems and their schools.

### *Themes in Native Education*

Distinct social themes in education have pertained specifically to Aboriginal peoples throughout Canadian history. The first is traditional community-based Aboriginal education before European settlement in North America. First Nations civilizations adapted, thrived, and flourished for thousands of years before the arrival of the Europeans. And this is a testament to the beliefs, ethics, values, value systems, and normative practices that prevailed both in and between Native communities before the occupation of North America by Europeans.

The second period is associated with the outreach, civilizing, Christianizing, and cultural extinction-oriented themes of education carried out by Eurocentric missionaries. Throughout the colonizing years, missionaries were dispatched first by the Roman Catholic Church and later by Protestant orders to socialize the Native peoples into European thought, values, and practices.

A third theme manifested itself throughout the residential school era in Canada, beginning in 1867 and lasting through the 1950s and 1960s. This was a time when Indian children were forcibly removed from their parents and the cultural influence of life on reserves. First Nations children were herded into residential schools where the theme of civilizing, Christianizing, and domesticating education was carried out in segregated facilities. The Indian residential schools were funded by the federal government and operated mainly by Protestant and Catholic missionaries. The schools were instruments of the federal government in pursuit of cultural genocide. They existed as systems where Native children were socialized apart from their parents; where brothers and sisters were schooled and socialized apart from each other; where language, Native spirituality, and Native culture were beaten out of children; and where they were educated and trained for cultural assimilation into western value structures. The residential schools, along with the network of federally controlled day schools were notably racist, coercive, and abusive. Fully sanctioned by the federal government, they practiced institutionalized racism and discrimination. They were sites where education policies and practices were steeped in ethnocentricism, prejudice, stereotyping, bigotry, and racism. Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, provided a partial perspective of intent in observing: "Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian department" (York, 1992). Currently in Canada, there are ongoing growing numbers of civil suits involving both religious groups and the federal government for sexual, physical, and emotional abuse toward Native children and youth who were in residential schools.

A fourth theme in education pertaining specifically to First Nations people emerged during the 1950s. Education moved from a federal government policy of

segregation and assimilation to a theme of normative integration of First Nations students into publicly funded schools. The 1950s marked the beginning of the Master Tuition Agreement approach to schooling, which was negotiated bilaterally between the Department of Indian Affairs and local provincial school boards on behalf of First Nations. Although the federal government moved away from a policy of segregation toward a policy of integration of Aboriginal children in the regular provincial school during the 1950s, the overall approach to education was also notably paternalistic, coercive, racist, discriminatory, and assimilative. It resulted in tuition agreement schooling that was, and continues to be, paternalistic, coercive, racist, discriminatory, and assimilative.

### *Tuition Negotiated Education*

The First Nations/provincial school boards tuition agreement schooling field is notably socially, politically, and administratively complex. The Indian Act continues to grant the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs and Northern Development jurisdiction over the education of Status Indian children. In fact, at the level of the normative order (Indian Act) to this day, provincial governments, territorial governments, public or separate school boards, and religious or charitable organizations are the only recognized bodies that can enter into negotiations with the Minister (Government of Canada, 1996, p. 35). Yet as of September 1994, the factual order is normatively different. The federal government (in fact DIAND) is no longer a mandated participant in First Nations/provincial school boards tuition agreement negotiations. Beginning in the 1950s and continuing to date, DIAND has moved through a three-phase process of tuition agreement negotiations change pertaining to provincial school boards/First Nations tuition schooling of status Indian children.

Initially DIAND served as sole agent in bilateral negotiations with provincial school boards (public or separate school boards) in the production of Master Tuition Agreements for the education of First Nations children. The First Nations were not involved in the negotiations themselves and, as with nearly all other aspects of Native life, the federal government acted on their behalf (Ferguson, 1993). In the next phase the federal government, through DIAND, acted as a co-representative with First Nations band councils and/or education authorities in negotiations with provincial school boards. Here the First Nations were potentially involved in negotiations themselves along with the federal government that was again acting on their behalf. However, as one might reasonably expect, there was a considerable gap between the normative order of intent of First Nations involvement in negotiations along with DIAND and school boards, and the factual order of actual Native involvement. The overall process continued to be paternalistic, coercive, racist, and discriminatory during this second phase of potential co-representative involvement of DIAND and First Nations in tuition agreement negotiations with provincial school boards. Federal tuition agreement negotiation policies were obviously designed to serve the interests of provincial school boards. As a result, First Nations were rarely participants in the negotiations.

The current phase is notably devolutionary in character. The federal government is no longer a mandated participant in tuition agreement negotiations with provincial school boards. Finally, at the level of the normative order and without

the overall benefit of facilitating amendments to sections 114 through 123 of the Indian Act, First Nations have been given a mandate to negotiate agreements themselves on behalf of their own communities for students attending schools off-reserve. The Crown does, however, continue to retain fiduciary responsibility for education programs and services purchased by First Nations from provincial school boards and/or other jurisdictions. Federal government involvement is in relation to funding of and secondary accounting for the costs of education programs and services provided by First Nations and/or purchased by First Nations through tuition agreement arrangements. DIAND's role has evolved to that of funding agent.

### *From Segregation, to Integration, to Native Control of Native Education*

Recent changes are a result of the Crown's recognition of the self-determination of First Nations and their right to control of their own education. This did not surface as a result of federal insight. On the contrary, it developed somewhat laggardly and reluctantly over an extended period. Recognition in these two areas was highly influenced by multiple factors including the federal government's White Paper, *Statement of Government of Canada on Indian Policy* (Government of Canada, 1969); the National Indian Brotherhood's response to the White Paper, *Indian Control of Indian Education* (NIB, 1972); the Assembly of First Nations' *Tradition and Education—Towards a Vision of Our Future* (AFN, 1988); and *The MacPherson Report: Tradition and Education: Towards a Vision of Our Future* (MacPherson, 1991).

Any meaningful federal policy on Native education presumes government knowledge, understanding, respect, and sensitivity pertaining specifically to the goals of education valued by the Aboriginal peoples as the driving forces underpinning education and other socialization practices directed toward Aboriginal children, youth, and adults. The federal government's White Paper proposing that Indian education be completely integrated into provincial and territorial school systems demonstrated a lack of such knowledge, understanding, respect, and sensitivity.

As a result of this, and in response to the federal government White Paper, the Aboriginal leadership published a landmark document (NIB, 1972) entitled *Indian Control of Indian Education*. Responding to different issues in different Aboriginal contexts, employing different conceptual views of Native education and Native society, and holding different visions of the destiny of Aboriginal peoples, the Native leadership denounced the integration policy of the federal government. The leadership identified two major goals for the education of Aboriginal children: education to reinforce Aboriginal identity, and education to provide Aboriginal children with the education and training essential to earn a good living in modern society. This vision of education was to be achieved in the context of both parental responsibility and local control of education. As a result of this reaction, the federal government initiated a policy for turning over control of education to First Nations education authorities.

### *Native Control of Education and Self-Government*

This overall process led to the Assembly of First Nations' multiple-volume report *Tradition and Education—Towards a Vision of Our Future* (1988), and the MacPherson Report (1991).

These two reports combined emphasized two different but interrelated concepts: Native control of Native education (NIB, 1972) and Indian self-government (AFN, 1988). Thus education became the first major battleground in the 1970s in the fight for Native control of Native education and Indian self-government in Canada as strategies of empowerment in overcoming forces of domination, control, oppression, assimilation, and cultural genocide. York (1992) provides a helpful perspective of the relationship of Native control of Native education and self-government:

To understand why the schools were the first battleground, one must understand the crucial importance of the education system in Canada's assault on Indian culture from the 1860's to the 1960's. The schools were the chief weapon of the missionaries and the federal bureaucrats in their systematic campaign to destroy Indian culture. Today, thousands of Indians still bear the scars of that war of attrition. (p. 27)

Canadians often assume that Indian self-government would entail the creation of a sovereign state or a new level of government. But in reality, self-government has a much more practical meaning for most Indian bands. It begins with the freedom to regain control of individual elements of their community: their schools, courts, health system, and child welfare system. These are the institutions that affect people most directly. By asserting their right to make their own decisions in such vital areas, Indian bands are liberating themselves from a state of dependence and government control. (p. 26)

Viewed in terms of domination, control, oppression, and cultural genocide at one end of the involvement continuum and empowerment, freedom, independence, and cultural freedom at the other; the Native education wheel has gone full circle. First there was traditional community-based Aboriginal education before the arrival of the Europeans; then Euro/ethnocentric education in segregated residential schools for assimilation into dominant culture; then integration in provincial schools for integration into mainstream society; and then Native self-determination, Native control of Native education, and Native self-government.

### *The Ontario Scene*

Because of devolution, most of Canada's 577 Indian bands administer all or part of the education activity of the Department of Indian Affairs. In Ontario 88 of 168 provincial school boards (53%) are First Nations tuition agreement school boards (Burns & Gamlin, 1995). For most, the tuition agreement negotiation context has changed dramatically at the level of the normative order, as INAC is no longer directly involved in negotiations and as First Nations work toward achieving de facto self-government, self-determination, sovereignty, and jurisdiction over education in the context of the inherent right of self-government. Native control of Native education means that it is important for school boards to know that negotiations are now bilateral and involve only school board and First Nations personnel. In fact First Nations are sovereign, and as such each has the right to exercise its authority, develop its policies and laws and control financial and other resources for the education of its citizens (Assembly of First Nations, 1988). It is evident at the

level of the normative order that the paradigm has shifted. Provincial school board personnel are required to deal directly with self-determining First Nations personnel on matters pertaining to tuition agreement negotiations in situations where First Nations elect to purchase tuition education programs and services from provincial boards of education. Those negotiations ought to occur in the spirit of Native control of Native education, self-determination, self-government, and the sovereignty of First Nations.

### *A Top-Down Phenomenon*

In recognition of major changes relating to school boards/First Nations tuition agreement negotiations, the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training (MET) funded a collaborative project involving MET, the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA), and the Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association (OSSTA). The project, jointly managed by OPSBA and OSSTA, led to the development, production, and distribution of a resource handbook entitled *School Boards/First Nations Tuition Agreements Resources Manual* (OPSBA, 1993-1994). The handbook was developed as a primary source to be used by provincial school boards and First Nations as they hammered out an agreement (Ferguson, 1993).

Although the content of the manual including its various concepts, ideas, and methods would seem like an ideal guide for systemic reform, it was written in the context of school board interests. In fact it reminds one of the concepts, ideas, and methods of treaty negotiations that resulted in the subjugation of Native peoples by the forces of Eurocentricism. The basic design of the manual, which includes a synthesis of various top-down tuition agreement models that have a history of serving the vested interests of provincial school boards, as well as the interests of modern capital, including both corporate and state interests via the Master Tuition Agreements with the federal government, may continue to be of potential instrumental use for school board planning and decision-making. However, an effective tuition agreement negotiation process must take into consideration the self-determination goals of First Nations; Native self-government concepts, ideas, methods, and values; Native control of Native education, including First Nations observations, concerns, interests, aspirations, and expectations regarding Native education (Burns 1995; 1996a; 1996b). Stated differently, negotiations based entirely on top-down approaches depicted in the manual will hardly result in meaningful involvement of First Nations in negotiation processes, effective tuition agreements, or successful tuition agreement schooling.

Although the social themes in education pertaining specifically to Native students may have changed from time to time, their effects have tended to remain constant. A cautionary note is warranted here: if First Nations do not achieve Native control of the tuition agreement negotiations, top-down, bilateral negotiations will continue to result in tuition agreement schooling for First Nations students that is oppressive, racist, discriminatory, alienating, and assimilative. Its impact will be similar to that of Eurocentricism and to those of other social themes in education. Results will be similar to those of treaty negotiations; they will have no meaning for the Native peoples.

### *Conceptual Confusion*

Native control of education is frequently associated with Native control over education management and administrative practices, under a veil of discredited Aboriginal leadership and within the range of limited areas of potential impact in situations where the federal government continues to retain legal and financial responsibilities for Indian education. This approach to Native control of Native education is not valid. It is counterproductive. It is also racist and discriminatory. Self-determination of First Nations must be recognized by school board personnel in the context of tuition negotiations, tuition agreements, and tuition schooling. This is vital to the future potential success of negotiated tuition agreements and tuition agreement schooling. First Nations people must be viewed as equal partners in the overall tuition process and not solely in terms of managing or administering the transfer of funds to school boards. Here I hypothesize that for tuition negotiation to be effective, and for tuition agreement schooling to be successful, negotiations must occur in an ethos of collaboration and meaningful Native community involvement (Burns & Smith, 1996). Such an ethos implies that the negotiations would occur between equals in an open, honest, cooperative, collaborative, and empowering atmosphere, and with Native self-determination, self-government, Native-inclusiveness, relevance, education excellence, and equity in mind throughout. True collaborative negotiations involving school boards and First Nations raise difficult questions about domination, power, control, status, prestige, beliefs, values, attitudes, moral purposes, norms of behavior, visions, aspirations, expectations, commitments, community participation, resources, and intentions.

Progress toward Native-inclusiveness, Native relevance, education excellence, and equity in tuition agreement education over the years has been dismal. An important reason for this widespread problem is that issues in achieving meaningful involvement of Native peoples in both school board/First Nations tuition agreement negotiations and tuition agreement schooling emerging from such processes have not been examined critically or acted on appropriately. Examination of relevant literature regarding Native education and our observations and experiences in the Native education field (Burns, 1996c; Burns & Gamlin, 1995; Burns & Haynes, 1995; Burns, Haché, & Haynes, 1993; Burns & Williams, 1986) leads me to believe that bilateral negotiations involving First Nations and local provincial school boards will not necessarily result in greater degrees of Native control of Native education as manifested by Native relevance, education excellence, equity, or Native-inclusiveness in First Nations tuition agreement schooling pertaining specifically to First Nations students. Such ends are probably unattainable in the absence of due process of meaningful involvement of First Nations personnel in the negotiation process. In the final analysis, a top-down (Tichy, 1983), school system-dominated approach to the negotiation process and/or tuition agreement schooling is counterproductive. It is hegemonic and serves the needs, interests, and aspirations of Eurocentricism and the culture of domination. It is the way of treaty negotiations of earlier times. School board/First Nations tuition agreements and their subsequent successful implementation must occur in the context of more meaningful provincial school boards and First Nations rela-

tions and involvement practices (Pettigrew, 1985; Balman & Deal, 1984; Nightingale, 1982; Tushman, 1977). It is my belief that given the sociopolitical, theoretical, and applied problems of school boards/First Nations tuition agreement negotiations, tuition agreements, and tuition agreement schooling, much can be gained by operating in the context of an overall conceptual logic of purposeful tuition agreement change.

The challenges confronting school board and First Nations in the negotiation of tuition agreements and the implementation of these agreements are many. Tuition negotiations as process, tuition agreements as content, tuition agreement schooling as opportunity structures feed on each other, and they are not culturally, economically, socially, and politically neutral terrains. The tuition agreement negotiation process is more important than the content of the actual tuition agreement. The latter is merely a product, and all too frequently products such as written policies are not implemented effectively in education. Unless there is meaningful involvement of self-determining First Nations peoples in tuition agreement negotiation, implementation, and monitoring processes whereby the overall tuition process becomes a process of First Nations inclusion and empowerment throughout, First Nations tuition agreement education results will continue to remain dismal. These results speak for themselves: Ontario secondary students are nine times more likely to graduate from high school than Native students living in Northern Ontario; since 1992 there has been a decline of over 500 First Nations students enrolled in the province of Ontario's schools, which reflects the increase in private schools registered with the Ministry and controlled by Native education authorities. Native Canadians are twice as likely to be unemployed as other Canadians. Graduation for Natives from grades 12 or 13 after consecutive years of schooling is less than one half the national rate, and about one fourth of the Native population has less than a grade 9 level of education (Frideres, 1993).

There is a vast theoretical literature on education and education change. Various education change models in this literature point to the importance of conceptualizing and managing change effectively. Equality of access, equality of program quality, and equality of outcome; Native relevance; education excellence; and Native-inclusiveness in schooling remain widespread institutionalized problems for First Nations tuition agreement students. Inequalities produced by schools pertaining specifically to Native peoples are fostered in part by the culture of school board systems and their institutionalized beliefs, values, norms, structures, and overall programmatic and behavioral practices, which are both racist and discriminatory in character. Combined, these contribute to a high incidence of alienation, grade and course repetition, suspensions, absenteeism, basic and general level placement, and dropping out of school (Common & Frost, 1994).

### *Effective Tuition Agreement Negotiations*

Effective tuition agreement negotiations, tuition agreements, and tuition agreement schooling involve a complex process of changing current practices potentially involving negotiations; the content and terms of tuition agreements; and provincial school system beliefs, values, attitudes, and norms to those that are more Native-inclusive. In the absence of cultural changes in these areas, defensible tuition agreement education is unattainable. Changes in beliefs, values, attitudes,



and professional norms will by necessity be the most difficult to bring about in the culture of school board systems. Changes in these areas tend to challenge the fundamental values and beliefs held by members of the culture of domination in school board systems regarding greater Native control of Native education and the fundamental purposes, structures, and processes of bilateral negotiations, tuition agreements, and tuition agreement schooling pertaining specifically to First Nations children, youth, and adults. Actual changes resulting from the implementation of tuition related innovations must be viewed in terms of a process of learning and resocialization involving school system personnel and members of the Native community. The overall process being advocated is a process of mutual adaptation where people change in their interactions with others. School boards must become more sensitive and responsive to First Nations' right to self-government, the self-determination of First Nations, and the right of First Nations to exercise greater control over their education. Provincial school boards must also become more sensitive and responsive to Native observations, concerns, interests, and aspirations underpinning Native control of Native education in the tuition context. This is essential in order to achieve Native relevance, excellence, Native-inclusiveness and equity in tuition agreement schooling and in order to prevent First Nations viewing their only alternative in terms of First Nations schools.

#### *The Need for Deep First-Order Change*

A great deal of research-based knowledge in existing studies of organizations, organization change, and planned educational change can be utilized to develop a more in-depth knowledge and understanding of problems in the tuition agreement negotiation and tuition agreement schooling fields. Although the critical path to school board/First Nations tuition agreement and tuition agreement education renewal may not be clear, new and different ways of thinking and working must be adopted by tuition agreement boards as they constantly face dynamic change forces in the Native tuition agreement field. School boards must work hard to learn how to make substantial contributions to the improvement of practices. Most First Nations children will attend provincial schools, through tuition agreement arrangements, at some point during their elementary and/or secondary school careers (Burns & Gamlin, 1995).

In highlighting the problem of greater Native control of Native tuition agreement schooling, the main implication is that school system organizations, tuition agreement processes, and tuition agreement schooling should not be taken for granted. How is it that despite the scope of school reform that has taken place in Ontario over the years, schooling and its results appear to have changed little for Native tuition students? Marris (1975) provides a partial perspective to this problem.

When those who have the power to manipulate change act as if they have only to explain, and when their explanations are not at once accepted, shrug off opposition as ignorance or prejudice, they express a profound contempt for the meaning of lives other than their own. For the reformers have already assimilated these changes to their purposes, and worked out a reformulation that makes sense to them, perhaps through months or years of analysis and debate. If they deny others the chance to do the same, they treat them as puppets dangling by the threads of their own conceptions. (p. 166)

Unless deeper changes occur in thinking, beliefs, understanding, values, and norms in school board systems, tuition agreement reforms will have little useful impact. In addition, First Nations will become increasingly alienated. First-order change (Cuban, 1988), an approach that seeks to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of what currently occurs in systems without attending to basic organization features underpinning failure, does not have the potential to effect needed changes in the culture of provincial school boards or their schools. The challenge, I hypothesize, will be for provincial school board personnel to struggle successfully to achieve greater degrees of second-order changes that affect the culture and structure of negotiations, the culture and structures of schools, and the culture and structure of tuition agreement schooling. This will be impossible to achieve unless they work collaboratively with First Nations personnel in an organized, cooperative, and coordinated manner in initiatives leading to restructuring roles and reorganizing responsibilities, including those involving school board tuition agreement negotiating personnel; First Nations negotiating personnel; school personnel; and students, parents, and elders in First Nations communities. Second-order changes thus conceived (Cuban 1988) seek to alter the fundamental ways in which organizations are put together and operate. Second-order change implies new goals, structures, processes, norms, roles, and results. The approach taken here is that reculturing, in both tuition agreement negotiation processes and tuition agreement schooling structures and processes, is basic to the issues of Native control, Native-inclusiveness, Native relevance, equity, and excellence in tuition agreement schooling. Stated differently, reculturing (second-order change) is more likely to lead to more effective restructuring (first-order change) in tuition agreement negotiations and tuition agreement education than the other way around. As pointed out by Fullan (1993), in most restructuring initiatives new structures are expected to result in new behaviors and cultures, but most fail to do so. Unless the restructuring involving school boards and First Nations in bipartite negotiations occurs in the context of cultural change of relations, negotiations—and indeed tuition agreement schooling—will remain paternalistic, coercive, racist, discriminatory, and assimilative. In the final analysis, beliefs and values are important because they shape thinking and action in provincial school board systems. Although structure is important, even more important is what actually occurs and does not occur in the structure of relationships, as in the case of provincial school boards/First Nations tuition negotiations and tuition schooling.

### *Native Education as Praxis of Native Control*

As can be seen, the tuition agreement process in Ontario has a history of being paternalistic, racist, and discriminatory. School boards/First Nations tuition agreement negotiations, tuition agreements, and tuition agreement schooling continue to be instruments of domination, control, and assimilation into the main stream. At the level of the normative order, the federal government is no longer a participant in the tuition negotiation process involving provincial school boards and First Nations. This situation provides First Nations with opportunities to gain greater control of First Nations tuition education. I firmly believe that the First Nations tuition agreement process is either an instrument of domination or empowerment and that empowerment is unlikely to be achieved unless First Nations gain both

individual and collective control over all aspects of the tuition agreement strategic change process including negotiations, agreements, and tuition agreement schooling. When self-determining First Nations negotiate with provincial school boards, they do so as sovereign governments. Provincial school boards are not self-determining entities. They are service stream organizations or agencies, and as such elements of provincial government apparatus; they do not have government status. First Nations, on the other hand, negotiate as governments interested in the possible purchase of education programs and services for First Nations students. The approach taken here focuses on First Nations/school boards tuition agreement negotiations, tuition agreements, and tuition agreement schooling as praxis (Freire, 1968) of Native self-determination, Native self-government, Native-inclusiveness, Native relevance, excellence and equity throughout. This praxis is different from that of domestication, domination, control, oppression, and assimilation. Praxis involves critical reflection and cultural action. It can be viewed as a process of critical reflection and cultural action leading to transformation of oppressive situations (Freire, 1968, 1969). For First Nations it is a process of learning to perceive social, cultural, political, and economic contradictions and to take action against its oppressive elements in provincial school boards and their schools in order to improve practices and conditions relating to tuition agreement schooling.

### *Summary and Conclusion*

Tuition agreement schooling is a process that has as its central focus Native control of Native education, Native self-determination, Native self-government, Native-inclusiveness, Native relevance, equity, and excellence in First Nations tuition agreement education. It is also a mode of education and learning necessary for making a good living in modern society; contributing to self-government; and participating actively in the advancement of Native society including the enhancement of lifestyle and life changes of Native peoples. It is important for tuition school boards to acknowledge the role of the educational system in producing and reproducing inequalities in society that are based on race, ethnocultural, gender, and class differences. It is also important for these educational systems to confront the challenge of diversity and difference in Canadian society and to develop a system that is more inclusive of Native people and capable of responding to Native concerns about education as it relates specifically to First Nations children, youth, and adults. School boards need to recognize that tuition agreement relations between their jurisdictions and First Nations have been such that the school system, and indeed the federal government through INAC, has failed to take seriously into account the rich knowledge and experiences of Native people as a minority group in the educational system.

Native-inclusive tuition agreement schooling can be achieved by ensuring that both the structures and practices that govern the delivery of Native education provide equality of access, equality of program quality, and equality of outcome (in both excellence and relevance) for the Native students covered by the agreement. To be able to deal effectively with these issues, it is important for school boards to acknowledge the nature and scope of both past and current oppressive practices in tuition agreement negotiations, provisions in tuition agreements, and tuition agreement schooling. It is of vital importance that school board trustees,

administrators, and school personnel actively work to eliminate systemic barriers to Native-inclusiveness, Native relevance, excellence, and equity in tuition agreement processes and tuition agreement schooling.

It is also important to point out that the informal or hidden aspects of schooling (i.e., course selection and promotion practices; school calendars; celebrations; ceremonies including awards and graduation ceremonies; assemblies; concerts; athletics; bulletin boards; hallway displays; art; etc.) influence students. The hidden curriculum (Apple, 1990) of a school affects students' aspirations, expectations, activities, attitudes, values, self-esteem, self-concept, motivation, and norms of student achievement. All of these come together to influence the ability of Native students as a minority to identify with and connect to the school in both meaningful and productive ways. Mainstream educational institutions are sites for the cultural transmission of hegemonic ideologies and knowledge in the structuring of society along race/ethnic, gender, sexuality, ability and class lines (Dei, 1996). Over the years, residential schools and mainstream schools have been sites of colonized schooling. As such they have consistently devalued and negated Native forms of knowledge, Native world views, and their relevance to education policies and practices. Equality of access, equality of program quality, equality of outcome, relevance, excellence, and Native-inclusiveness in schooling remains a widespread institutionalized problem for First Nations and their tuition agreement students, and will not change significantly until factors of the hidden curriculum and other factors underpinning the culture of colonized schooling are addressed. The hidden curriculum of domination, control, domestication, racism, and assimilation must be rooted out in structure, ideology, curriculum, and process of negotiations and tuition schooling.

Inequalities produced by schools pertaining specifically to Native peoples are ordained by the culture of school board systems, including their institutionalized beliefs, values, norms, structures, and both programmatic and behavioral regularities that exist as systemic barriers to Native-inclusiveness, Native relevance, excellence, and equity in First Nations tuition agreement schooling. These systemic barriers contribute to the high incidence of grade repetition, course repetition, suspensions, absenteeism, basic level placement, general level placement, and both psychological and physical dropping out from high school among Native students.

For the purposes of an agreement, provincial school boards can organize their improvement initiatives around least seven social factors of educational inclusion, relevance, equity, and excellence that pertain to Native students (Burns & Gamlin, 1995). These include curricular and instructional practices, organizational practices, linguistic issues and practices, Native personnel equity, school culture, school/community involvement and relations, and educational outcome equity.

Native-inclusive, relevant, and equitable tuition agreements, as legally binding policy documents, reflect both school board and First Nations community intent regarding their prevailing beliefs, values, aspirations, commitments, expectations, norms, and related practices governing tuition agreement schooling for Native children, youth, and adults. Native-inclusive tuition negotiations, tuition agreements, and tuition agreement schooling provide opportunities to bring about

needed second-order changes in the status quo, which at present is a manifestation of the cultural imperialism of tuition agreement provincial school boards and the culture of their schools. Its factors, themes, and results are no longer acceptable to self-determining First Nations. Meaningful Native involvement in tuition negotiations and education improvement in the First Nations tuition agreement field are social ideals worth fighting for. Education, as always, involves both social and political power relations. Provincial school board/First Nations tuition negotiations and tuition agreement schooling are no exceptions. As a result, I recommend collaboration toward a progressive politics of tuition negotiations, tuition schooling, and social change.

#### Note

The concepts and ideas in this article were first presented to the 9th World Congress of Comparative Education Societies, University of Sydney, Australia, July 1996.

#### References

- Apple, M. (1990). *Ideology and curriculum*. New York: Routledge and Kegan.
- Assembly of First Nations. (1988). *Tradition and Education—Towards a vision of our future*. Ottawa, ON: National Indian Brotherhood-Assembly of First Nations.
- Balman, L., & Deal, T. (1984). *Modern approaches to understanding and managing organizations*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Barman, J., Hébert, Y. & McCaskill, D. (Eds.). (1987). *Indian education in Canada. Volume 2: The challenge*. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.
- Burns, G.E. (1995, March). *Tuition agreements: Instruments of domination, control, and assimilation*. Paper presented at the Taking Charge of Change Conference on Native Education, London, ON.
- Burns, G.E. (1996a, May). *Gaining First Nation control of Native tuition agreement education*. Paper presented at the 2nd Annual First Nations Conference (NAABIN 96), Kenjegin Teg, West Bay Campus, Manitoulin Island, ON.
- Burns, G.E. (1996b, July). *Restructuring education and education relations within the provincial school boards/First Nations tuition agreement education field*. Paper presented at the 9th World Congress of Comparative Education Societies, University of Sydney, Australia.
- Burns, G.E. (1996c, May). *Toward a model of Native inclusiveness in First Nations tuition negotiations, tuition agreements and tuition agreement schooling*. Paper presented at the Visions of the North, Voices of the North Conference, Nipissing University, North Bay, ON.
- Burns, G.E., & Gamlin, P. (1995). Best practices for Native students. In G. Dei & S. Razack (Eds.), *Inclusive schooling: An inventory of contemporary practices designed to meet the challenges of a diverse student body* (chap. 7). Toronto, ON: Ontario Ministry of Education and Training.
- Burns, G.E., Haché, D., & Haynes, P. (1993). *A First Nation education study: An examination of a First Nation education governance, programs, facilities, curriculum resources, structures, processes and impacts (Executive Summary)*. Sudbury, ON: OISE Midnorthern Centre.
- Burns, G.E., & Haynes, P. (1995). *School board-First Nation collaboration for successful transition of First Nation, fly-in students*. Research report submitted to the Batchewana Nation of Ojibways, Sault Ste. Marie, ON. Sudbury, ON: OISE Midnorthern Centre.
- Burns, G.E., & Smith, A.G. (1996). Fostering an ethos of collaboration. *Canadian School Executive*, 16(3), 16-23.
- Burns, G.E., & Williams, L. (1986). *Moose Deer Point education and community study executive report*. Parry Sound, ON: Moose Deer Point First Nation and West Parry Sound Board of Education.
- Chisholm, S. (1994). Assimilation and oppression: The northern experience. *Education Canada*, 34(4), 28-34.

- Comeau, P., & Santin, A. (1995). *The first Canadians: A profile of Canada's Native people*. Toronto, ON: Lorimer.
- Common, R., & Frost, L. (1994). *Teaching wigwams—A modern vision of Native education*. Muncey, ON: Anishinaabe Kendaaswin.
- Cuban, L. (1988, Jan./Feb.). Reforming, again, again, and again. *Educational Researcher*, 19(1), 3-13.
- Dei, G. (1996). *Anti-racism theory and practice*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood.
- Ferguson, H. (1993, September/October). Native self-government hits school boards. *Education Today*, 14-17.
- Freire, P. (1968). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Seabury Press.
- Freire, P. (1969). *Education for critical consciousness*. New York: Continuum.
- Frideres, J.S. (1993). *Native people in Canada: Contemporary conflicts*. Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall.
- Fullan, M. (1993). *Change forces: Probing the depths of educational reform*. Bristol, PA: Falmer.
- Government of Canada. (1969). *Statement of Government of Canada on Indian Policy*. Ottawa, ON: Author.
- Government of Canada. (1996). House of Commons report on Aboriginal education: *Sharing the knowledge—The path to success and equal opportunities in education*. Ottawa, ON: Communication Group Publishing, Public Works and Government Services Canada.
- MacPherson, J.C. (1991). *The MacPherson report: Tradition and education towards a vision of our future*. Ottawa, ON: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.
- Marris, P. (1975). *Loss and change*. New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday.
- National Indian Brotherhood. (1972). *Indian control of Indian education*. Ottawa, ON: Author.
- Nightingale, D. (1982). *Workplace democracy*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Ontario Public School Boards' Association. (1993-1994). *School boards/First Nations tuition agreements resource manual*. Toronto, ON: Ministry of Education and Training.
- Pettigrew, A. (1985). *The awakening giant: Continuity and change in ICI*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Tichy, N. (1983). *Managing strategic change*. New York: Wiley.
- Tushman, M. (1977). A political approach to organizations: A review and rationale. *Academy of Management Review*, 2, 206-216.
- Viola, H.G. (1990). *After Columbus: The Smithsonian chronicle of North American Indians*. New York: Orion Books.
- York, G. (1992). *The dispossessed: Life and death in Native Canada*. Toronto, ON: Little, Brown.